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Graduate Council Minutes

Graduate Council

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2-28-2013

# Graduate Council Minutes - February 28, 2013

Graduate Council

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

February 28, 2013 Minutes

Members Present

David Anderson, Jane Bellamy, David Bemis, Ben Blalock, Chris Boake, Eric Boder, Marianne Breinig, Ralph Brockett, Amy Broemmell, Ernest Brothers, Luis Cano, Catherine Cox, Joy DeSensi, Leslee Fisher, Pat Freeland, Carolyn Hodges, Stephen Kania, David Keffer, Sandra Leach, Jan Lee, Catherine Luther, Sibyl Marshall, Jennifer Morrow, Stephanie Ohnesorg, Masood Parang, Christian Parigger, Sarah Potter, Greg Reed, Kay Reed, Cynthia Rocha, Marian Roman, Avigail Sachs, Amanda Sanford, Shawn Spurgeon, John Stier, Jeannine Studer, Dixie Thompson, Scott Wall, Candace White

The Graduate Council meeting was called to order by Ralph Brockett on Thursday, February 28, 2013, at 3:00 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room, Black Cultural Center.

1. Report of the Online Learning Taskforce

Sally McMillan, Vice Provost and Chair of the Online Learning Taskforce, presented summary conclusions of the Taskforce as noted from its final report of December 13, 2012. The charge of the Taskforce was to focus on how the university should support online courses and distance programs. The report provided draft mission, vision, and values statements and also provided a framework for the support needed to sustain and grow online learning. Carolyn Hodges asked how the proposed Director of Online Programs would work with the curricular change process. McMillan confirmed that this person will be a facilitator and will work with the offices and academic units in the curriculum process as it exists now. A question of assessment tools for online learning was raised. Marianne Breinig raised a concern about addressing the current problem of graduate student appeals developing out of online courses related to how well informed the students and faculty are in online learning.

2. Minutes of the Preceding Meeting

The minutes of the January 31, 2013 meeting were approved by the Graduate Council as presented.

3. Committee Reports

Academic Policy Committee

Stefanie Ohnesorg, Chair of the Academic Policy Committee (APC), presented the report for the February 21, 2013 meeting. (Attachment 1) Ohnesorg presented one policy change recommended for approval and the Graduate Council voted to approve.

- **DEFENSE OF DISSERTATION EXAMINATION – APPROVED BY APC AND GRADUATE COUNCIL – EFFECTIVE FALL 2014**

A doctoral candidate must pass an oral examination on the dissertation. The dissertation, in the form approved by the major professor, must be distributed to the committee at least two weeks before the examination. The examination must be scheduled through the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to the examination. Except with prior approval from the Dean of the Graduate School, the examination must be given in university-approved facilities. The examination is announced publicly and is open to all faculty members. The defense of dissertation will be administered by all members of the doctoral committee after completion of the dissertation and all course requirements. This examination must be held at least two weeks before the final date for acceptance and approval of dissertation (indicated on the Graduate Student Deadline Dates) by the Graduate School on behalf of the Graduate Council. The major professor must submit the results of the defense (Pass/Fail form with original signatures) by the deadline date.

Ohnesorg presented information for review on Remote Participation in Oral Defenses. The committee had developed a draft policy that focused on documenting approval by the academic department when remote participation is part of the thesis or dissertation defense. She requested that Council members review the draft policy with others in their academic units and bring their input and comments back to the next Graduate Council meeting. The following comments were offered at the meeting:

- Remote participation is primarily used by departments and students in emergency situations.
- The policy should address (1) the types of conditions where remote participation is appropriate and (2) procedures to use when emergencies arise.
- The policy should address who is responsible for obtaining the endorsement for remote participation.
- The policy should address how much of the committee should be present, such as, a majority of the members, or the major professor.
- A benefit of a remote participation policy is to facilitate participation on committees by courtesy members who are faculty from other institutions.
- A primary consideration is for student protection to have a public defense and full support of all the committee.

Ohnesorg also briefed the Council on other topics that the committee will be addressing, such as graduate certificate programs and leave of absence policy.

#### Appeals Committee

Marianne Breinig, Chair of the Appeals Committee, reported that the committee has reviewed two student appeals.

#### Credentials Committee

Stephen Kania, Chair of the Credentials Committee, reported on the February 14, 2013 meeting.

| Name             | Title                             | Current Depart.                 | Type of Request             | Approval             |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Melcher, Charles | Research Professor                | Materials Science & Engineering | Non-Tenure Track Continuing | 5 Years<br>8/1/2018  |
| Morris, James    | Joint Faculty Assistant Professor | Materials Science & Engineering | Non-Tenure Track Continuing | 5 Years<br>8/1/2018  |
| Pevey, Ronald    | Associate Professor               | Nuclear Engineering             | Tenured Continuing          | 10 Years<br>8/1/2023 |
| Rawn, Claudia    | Joint Faculty Assistant Professor | Materials Science & Engineering | Non-Tenure Track Continuing | 5 Years<br>8/1/2018  |

The Council approved unanimously the four recommendations for faculty approval to direct dissertations.

#### Nominating Committee

Jeannine Studer reported for Don Hodges, Chair of the Nominating Committee, a slate of three nominees for 2013-2014 Chair-Elect. The committee was composed of D. Hodges, Ben Blalock, and Jeannine Studer. The nominees are:

- Patricia Freeland, College of Arts and Sciences
- Shawn Spurgeon, College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences

Graduate Council members will vote electronically to choose the Chair-Elect. Results of the voting will be announced at the next Graduate Council meeting.

#### 4. New Business

There was no new business

#### 5. Administrative Reports and Announcements

##### Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

Carolyn Hodges, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, presented the following information:

- Concurrent Master's Requirements.

The policy for implementation of the concurrent master's degree for doctoral students was approved by the Graduate Council in April 2012 and became effective last fall. Some programs have posed questions about how the policy affects completion of master's degree requirements. Any student taking advantage of this policy must complete all requirements for the master's degree, whether through thesis or non-thesis track, as printed in the Graduate Catalog

and program graduate handbooks. It is the responsibility of the advisors and directors of graduate studies to ensure that those requirements are met. No shortcuts or waivers of any requirements for the master's degree are permitted.

- Student Learning Outcomes.

Many faculty members are involved in writing learner outcomes as part of the preparation for the 2015 SACS visit. The Graduate School will be working on general, university-wide outcomes that point to the mission and value-added aspect of graduate education. I will put together a committee to look at existing models to move forward with the project.

- Taylor Eighmy Memo on Sequestration Effects on Graduate Assistants.

On February 27, Dr. Taylor Eighmy, Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement, sent a memo to all principal investigators on federally funded projects regarding possible reductions that may result from the imminent sequestration. While the University is not sure of the full impact if the across-the-board cuts do go into effect, I join Dr. Eighmy in his urging that we make every possible effort to sustain support for graduate students and staff funded by the grants and contracts, especially graduate students on existing awards. In cases of cuts that require re-budgeting, The Office of Sponsored Programs in the Office of Research and Engagement will work with college business officers and deans to determine how to manage the changes.

#### Graduate Deans' Group

Joy DeSensi, Chair of the Graduate Deans' Group, presented a report for the February 14, 2013 meeting. (Attachment 2)

- Report of the Top 25 Initiatives was given by C. Hodges.
- Directors of Graduate Studies Workshop will be held on March 20, 2013.
- Graduate Fellowship application deadline is March 5, 2013, 5:00 p.m.

#### Graduate Student Senate

Amanda Sanford, President of the Graduate Student Senate (GSS), presented the following information:

- March 2, 2013 is the "Love Your Library" Fun Run and 5K Race.
- Travel awards for Summer 2013 – Forms are due April 15, 2013.
- Graduate Student Town Hall Event is Thursday, March 14, 2013 in the Law School, with live web cast and Tweets.
- GSS is engaging groups to assist with plans for the new, on campus Graduate Student Orientation for Fall 2013.
- GSS passed resolution on domestic partner benefits and will request response from the Chancellor.

#### Graduate Council Chair

Ralph Brockett, Chair of the Graduate Council, reported on topics discussed in the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and confirmed that he will present the Graduate Council minutes from January 31, 2013 to the Faculty Senate on March 4, 2013.

6. Items from the Floor

Marianne Breinig brought up a problem that graduate assistants are experiencing in provision of coverage because of delays with student health insurance verification. Brockett will follow-up with Jim Boyle, Director of the Student Health Services, for more information.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kay Reed and Catherine Cox in the absence of Gay Henegar  
Secretary to Graduate Council

**ATTACHMENT 1**  
**ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE**  
**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2:15 P.M. – 3:30 P.M.**  
**111 STUDENT SERVICES BUILDING**

Present: Stefanie Ohnesorg (Chair), Ralph Brockett, Russell Crook, Yanfei Gao, Jennifer Morrow, Christian Parigger, Kay Reed, Marian Roman, Amanda Sanford, Shawn Spurgeon.

The meeting was called to order by Stefanie Ohnesorg, Chair, at 2:15 p.m.

**1. DEFENSE OF DISSERTATION EXAMINATION – APPROVED BY APC  
– APPROVED BY GRADUATE COUNCIL ON 2/28/2013 - TO BE  
EFFECTIVE FALL 2014**

**CHANGE PROPOSED:**

The examination must be scheduled through the Graduate School at least **two** weeks prior to the examination.

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

A doctoral candidate must pass an oral examination on the dissertation. The dissertation, in the form approved by the major professor, must be distributed to the committee at least two weeks before the examination. The examination must be scheduled through the Graduate School at least one week prior to the examination. Except with prior approval from the Dean of the Graduate School, the examination must be given in university-approved facilities. The examination is announced publicly and is open to all faculty members. The defense of dissertation will be administered by all members of the doctoral committee after completion of the dissertation and all course requirements. This examination must be held at least two weeks before the final date for acceptance and approval of dissertation (indicated on the Graduate Student Deadline Dates) by the Graduate School on behalf of the Graduate Council. The major professor must submit the results of the defense (Pass/Fail form with original signatures) by the deadline date.

**Rationale:**

The current policy requires that the defense be scheduled no more than one week prior to the actual defense. Since the copies of the dissertation must be submitted to the committee at least two weeks prior to the defense, it will simplify the timing requirements to have the defense date set and the copies distributed at the same deadline. The Scheduling of Defense of Dissertation form is the trigger that the Graduate School uses to produce the pass/fail form for the defense. To allow adequate time for the department to receive the pass/fail form and prepare for the defense,

more time is needed. Thesis defenses are required to be scheduled two weeks in advance of the event, as well.

Committee Discussion:

The committee also requested that public announcements of the dissertation defenses be restored, as they had been in the time period before the most recent change to the scheduling deadline.

**2. REMOTE PARTICIPATION IN ORAL DEFENSES – APPROVED BY APC – TO BE EFFECTIVE FALL 2014 (PRESENTED AS INFORMATION AT GRADUATE COUNCIL 2/28/2013)**

NEW POLICY PROPOSED:

This proposal is designed to provide documentation of approval by the academic department when remote participation is part of the thesis or dissertation defense. The documentation is then recorded in the student's record in the Graduate School.

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

It is generally expected that all members of graduate committees should be physically present at all required oral thesis or dissertation defenses. Under special circumstances, however, it is permissible for the student, and/or committee members to participate from a remote location provided the conditions listed below are met:

- Advance agreement of the student and all committee members has been obtained;
- All participants join in with two way audio and video connections; audio only connections must be approved by the major professor if the video connection is not possible. When the student is the remote participant, his or her connection must be an audio and video connection;
- Any visual aids or other materials have been distributed in advance to the remote participants;
- The committee members participate in real time during the entire meeting, discussion, presentation, and evaluation;
- The student is responsible for making the scheduling arrangements, and the major professor accepts responsibility for the oversight of any logistical arrangements necessary;
- Any costs associated with remote participation are not the responsibility of the Graduate School, and must be arranged in advance; and
- The UTK requirement of a public presentation for oral defense of dissertation is still in effect.



The student is required to submit the Remote Participation at Oral Defense Notification Form together with the Scheduling of the Defense Form to the Graduate School when the student or member(s) of the committee participate remotely.

Rationale:

This policy is designed to assist students and departments with discussions for arrangements of oral defenses. The "Remote Participation at Oral Defense Notification Form" would be attached to the Scheduling of Defense of Dissertation Form so that it is submitted at the same time, two weeks in advance of the defense. A reminder should be inserted into the instructions for the two forms to encourage students to plan for collection of signatures on the Pass/Fail Form when part of the committee (or the student) is participating remotely.

### **3. GRADUATE STUDENT LEAVE POLICY (DISCUSSED AT APC 2/21/2013)**

At the meeting, Amanda Sanford presented paper copies of the draft of the Graduate Student Senate's Graduate Student Leave Policy. The committee discussed some of the areas involved in the policy, such as student registration policies.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 14, 2013.

**ATTACHMENT 2**  
**Graduate Deans' Group**  
**Thursday, February 14, 2013, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.**  
**Graduate School Conference Room**

Attending:

Chris Boake, Ralph Brockett, Ernest Brothers, Millie Cheatham, Joy DeSensi (Chair), George Dodds, Carolyn Hodges, Stephen Kania, Yvonne Kilpatrick, Tom Ladd, Sandra Leach, Catherine Luther, Joann Ng. Hartman, Stefanie Ohnesorg, John Stier, Masood Parang, Carol Parker, Peggy Pierce, Kay Reed

The Graduate Deans' Group meeting was called to order by Joy DeSensi at 2:00 p.m. on February 14, 2013 in the Graduate School conference Room.

1. Minutes of the Graduate Deans' Group Meeting from January 10, 2013 were approved.
2. Top 25 Report – Carolyn Hodges
  - Top 25 - Dr. Hodges shared the Top 25 Report presented to the Chancellor's Cabinet on February 4. There is an effort to communicate with faculty, staff, and students across campus about the progress of the Top 25 strategic plan. Dr. Hodges shared that Melissa Shivers is now the Top 25 team leader coordinator, as Mary Albrecht is now the SACS contact representative.
  - There are now ten 5-year bachelor's to master's degree programs available at UTK.
  - Dual/Joint International Degree Program – We have an agreement with the University of Padua that has been approved by SACS for implementation. There is currently a student on campus from University of Padua who is earning a PhD with a major in Educational Psychology and Counseling.
  - Speak Test – There will be a new Speak Test for international students beginning fall 2013. Dr. JoBeth Bradley will continue to coordinate and assess Speak Test results and offer guidance and advice to students and their advisors, but there will be a new outside source for the test.
  - Graduate School website – Consultants have evaluated the website and will begin work on site revisions in late spring.
  - Fall 2012 enrollment numbers and demographics were presented.

- The Bredesen Center has brought in a second cohort of students. Both groups, which include Chancellor's Distinguished Scholars, are strong and doing well.
  - Graduate School Senate – The GSS has developed a proposal for a graduate student Family/Medical Leave policy. Copies of the proposal were provided to the group, which was asked to read the proposal and provide feedback.
  - New Graduate Student Orientation – The Graduate Student Senate requested the on-campus orientation for graduate students be established. This will occur in the fall of 2013. Individuals from various offices will be invited to talk about what is available for graduate students on campus; there is a possibility that campus tours will also be scheduled. The Graduate Student Senate offered to help with the event, and the Chancellor has indicated he would cover the cost of a luncheon for the new students.
2. Graduate Admissions Report – Yvonne Kilpatrick  
Yvonne Kilpatrick presented a chart (Attached) regarding admissions for spring 2012 vs. fall 2012. It appears we are on track with the same numbers from last year. Yvonne Kilpatrick pointed out that many files are still in the department waiting for a decision. The deadline for International students was February 1. It was suggested to increase the size of files that can be sent with the application since Architecture and Art have larger portfolio type files students must submit. Yvonne indicated she would have Greg Tipps contact CollegeNet to ask about increasing the file size.
3. International Student Orientation – Joann Ng Hartmann
- Mandatory student Check-In Dates - Students must choose one of the following Check-In dates: July 31, August 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, or 18 (8:30 a.m. – Noon).
  - International Student Orientation is Thursday, August 15, 2013, 1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. which is a week before classes start. First-time UTK international students must attend this orientation. Students are instructed at the Orientation that they must take the English Placement Exam. The exam will take all morning, and their college should plan something for the afternoon, but again they must attend that morning.
  - English Placement Exam is Friday, August 16. This is a 2 ½ to 3 hour exam. Graders will grade the exams over the weekend and an email will be sent to students with their grade.
  - Monday morning, August 19, those who need help with their English must be at the International House (8:00-11:00 a.m.) to be enrolled in ENGL 121.

- JoAnn Hartmann explained how the process works:
  - i) It is critical to return the Graduate School Admission Application as soon as possible as this begins the I-20 process for international students.
  - ii) An I-20 cannot be issued until all documents are received in the admissions file. This includes: a) copy of Passport, b) completed and signed Financial Statement Form, and c) bank letter or statement showing funds or Assistantship letter.
  - iii) Once a student is admitted the I-20 is sent. An email is also sent with critical information and dates for the student.
  - iv) After the I-20 is sent, the student applies for her/his VISA.
- 4. Graduate School Fellowships – Joy DeSensi
  - Joy DeSensi reminded the group of the March 5<sup>th</sup> deadline for Graduate School Fellowship applications.
- 5. Directors of Graduate Studies Workshop – Joy DeSensi
  - The Directors of Graduate Studies Workshop will be held on March 20. It is very important that your Department Directors of Graduate Studies attend this workshop as critical information is presented.
- 6. Other  
No other business was discussed.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:15.

The next and final Graduate Deans' Group meeting for this year will be held on Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup>. in the Haslam Business Building, Room 334.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Catherine Cox

Gay Henegar  
Secretary to Graduate Deans' Group